

Message Text

SECRET

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

SS-15 NSC-05 PRS-01 /054 W
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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9277

INFO DOD WASHDC

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

S E C R E T WELLINGTON 0568

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, AS, NZ, SN, UK

SUBJECT: USN ACCESS TO STORES BASIN AND FUEL DEPOT

REF STATE 239185

1. BEGIN SECRET. WASHINGTON DATELINED STROY BY NZPA STAFF
CORRESPONDENT BRUCE KOHN HEADLINED "NEW ZEALAND PRESENCE IN
SINGAPORE EMBARRASSING AS UNITED STATES BEGINS TO HORN IN"
APPEARED IN WELLINGTON EVENING POST MARCH 3. THE TENOR
OF ARTICLE (WHICH FOLLOWS) IS THAT CURRENT GNZ
EMBARRASSED BY PRESENCE OF NEW ZEALAND TROOPS IN SINGAPORE
AS UNITED STATES BEGINS TO REASSESS SOUTHEAST ASIAN
POSITION. ARTICLE ALLEGES AMERICA IS PRESSURING NZ TO
ASSUME AN ADMINSTRATIVE AND POLITICAL ROLE IN SECURING SINGAPORE
FACILITIES INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR US END USE.

2. ARTICLE IS SOURCE OF GREAT CONCERN BOTH TO
THIS EMBASSY AS WELL AS SECRETARY DEFENSE ROBERTSON AND OTHER
GNZ OFFICIALS AND COULD VERY LIKELY DAMAGE SERIOUSLY PROSPECTS OF
GNZ MANAGEMENT OF SINGAPORE FACILITIES (REFTEL). WHILE

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SOURCES OF KOHN'S ARTICLE NOT KNOWN THERE ARE INDICATIONS

THAT KOHN BASED AT LEAST PART OF HIS STORY ON USG SOURCES. WE CANNOT STRESS TOO STRONGLY THE POTENTIAL DAMAGE OF THIS ARTICLE AND URGE THAT ALL THOSE WHO HAVE HAD RECENT CONTACT WITH KOHN REFRAIN IN FUTURE FROM DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT. I AM DISCUSSING RAMIFICATIONS THIS ARTICLE WITH MFA SECRETARY CORNER AND DEFENSE SECRETARY ROBERTSON TODAY AND THEIR REACTION WILL BE SUBJECT SEPTTEL. END SECRET.

3. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED "NZ PRESENCE IN SINGAPORE EMBARRASSING AS US BEGINS TO HORN IN. NZPA STAFF CORRESPONDENT BRUCE KOHN. WASHINGTON, FEB 28. THE PRESENCE OF NEW ZEALAND TROOPS IN SINGAPORE IS BECOMING AN ACUTE EMBARRASSMENT TO THE ROWLING GOVERNMENT AS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BEGINS TO REASSESS ITS POSITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF PROSPECTIVE NEUTRAL GOVERNMENTS IN CAMBODIA, THAILAND AND VIETNAM. THE REASON, ACCORDING TO A VARIETY OF SOURCES HERE, IS THE INCREASING AUTHORITARISANISM OF THE SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KWAN YEW, AND THE CRUCIAL PLACE THAT SINGAPOREAN NAVAL FACILITIES ARE ASSUMING IN WESTERN DEFENSE PLANS.

"TOP-LEVEL FORD ADMINISTRATION SOURCES CONFIRMED TODAY THAT THE USA WAS MAKING INCREASING USE OF THESE NAVAL FACILITIES, AND ADDED THAT EACH TIME THE RUSSIANS SENT A SHIP INTO SINGAPORE, 'WE FEEL TEED OFF.'

"NEW ZEALAND IS RESISTING AMERICAN PRESSURES TO HAVE IT ASSUME AN ADMINSTRATIVE AND POLITICAL ROLE IN SECURING THE FACILITIES FOR PRIMARILY AMERICAN OPERATIONAL USE, BUT IN THE PROCESS IS INCURRING SUSPICIONS AS TO THE DEPTH OF ITS ATTACHMENT TO THE ANZUS ALLIANCE.

"THE FORD ADMINISTRATION WANTS NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA TO ASSUME A BIGGER ROLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BASE-- A ROLE THAT THE LABOUR GOVERNMENTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES ARE REPORTED BY ADMINISTRATION INSIDERS HERE TO BE RESISTING.

"BUT SO IMPORTANT IS SINGAPORE BECOMING TO ALLIED STRATEGIC
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PLANS FOR INDIAN OCEAN AND WESTERN PACIFIC DEFENSE THAT A MAJOR US ARM-TWISITING OF ITS ANZUS ALLIES SEEMS LIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE--IF IT HAS NOT ALREADY BEGUN.

"THE BASIC NEW ZEALAND OBJECTIONS TO ITS FURTHER INVOLVE-
MENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OR THE HOLDING OF SINGAPOREAN BASES
CENTRE ON FIANCE AND NEW ZEALAND'S ABSOLUTE REFUSAL TO
BECOME A 'FRONT MAN' FOR AMERICAN DEFENSE OPERATIONS.

"IT APPEARS THAT THE ROWLING GOVERNMENT HAS INSISTED TO THE USA THAT IF AMERICA WANTS SINGAPORE TO BECOME A BASTION BASE OF THE WESTERN DEFENSE STRUCTURE OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN AND THE INDIAN OCEAN, IT MUST MAKE ITS OWN DEALS WITH MR LEE KWAN YEW. A SIMILAR VIEW IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT.

"THE ISSUE IS ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE DIPLOMATIC SUBJECTS TO HAVE ARISEN AMONG THE THREE GOVERNMENTS SINCE THE USA WANTED NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIAN FLAGS TO BE FLOWN ALONGSIDE THE STARS AND STRIPES IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

"AND, ACCORDING TO PENTAGON OFFICIALS HERE, IF NEITHER NEW ZEALAND NOR AUSTRALIA IS PREPARED TO GO ALONG WITH AN UPGRADING OF SINGAPORE-IF MR LEE KWAN YEW IS AGREEABLE-- THE POSSIBILITY OF A MAJOR ANZUS BASE IN AUSTRALIA MUST BE REGARDED AS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE.

"IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT AN IMMEDIATE DECISION ON THE ISSUES WILL BE MADE, BUT THEY WILL BE MAJOR TOPICS OF DISCUSSION AT THE ANZUS COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON LATE IN APRIL." END UNCLASSIFIED.
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